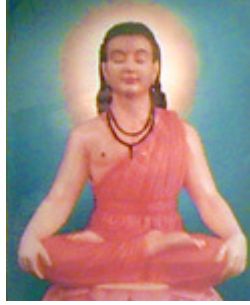




HARIPATHA

An Advaitic Composition of Jnaneshwara

Jnaneshwara



Great Marathi poet, philosopher, mystic, yogi and saint who attained Samadhi 700 years back in his early twenties believing his work completed. His commentary on Bhagwadgeeta, Bhavarthadeepika or Jnaneshwari was written when he was only about 15 years old. In the eighties of twentieth century Jnaneshwari was added to the list of cultural heritage of the world by UNESCO, due to his unconventionally cosmopolitan visions, thinking and writing without creed and caste. Even today, the people of Maharashtra sing his compositions and his glory. Jnaneshwara and Jnaneshwari both have perhaps very rare distinction and privilege of being addressed as Maauli – loving mother.

What is Haripatha?

The Haripatha consists of a series of 27 ecstatic musical poems or abhangas which repeatedly praise the value of chanting of God's names, describe the countless benefits to be gained, and gives us many insights into the correct way to live a spiritual life; a life immersed in the blissful presence of this divinity whom Jnaneshwara calls Hari, and our own Self.

The devotional song of Maharashtra is typically an "*abhang*" which is a short verse of about four lines in olden Marathi, well balanced syllabically and with beauty and melody of its own. The essence of the *abhang* is its simplicity. The appeal to Lord Hari or Panduranga is ever transparent through few but well chosen words, which even when chanted casually can take the devout to great heights of peace and tranquility. The text also lends itself admirably to musical compositions because of the subtle balance of words fitting well into elegant *taal* patterns. The appeal of the *abhang* to the common man is obviously unique.

The *Haripatha* enjoys today a special place amidst all religious texts in any Maharashtrian family. And rightly so because unlike other *abhangas* the themes of *Haripatha abhangas* relate directly to our daily lives and more importantly, they are easy to understand even for the novice.

What is the significance of Haripatha?

Eternally Relevant

A strong positive point about *Haripatha* is that it does not preach from an ivory tower. It does not philosophize unduly nor does it tax the reader with complicated arguments of metaphysics nor force him to seek renunciation in the model of a true *sannyasin*. It does not even teach an exalted *karma yoga* at a high intellectual level like *karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana* which involves the very difficult entity of *nishkama karma* or action with total detachment. The theme of *Haripatha* is eternally relevant because it essentially coaxes the common man to carry on with his job despite all difficulties, but seek the help of the Lord constantly to gain inner strength and peace. Another special feature of the *Haripatha* is contained in the name itself, viz. the power of *namasmarana* or the chanting of the Lord's name. References to the birth-death cycle, the transience of material possessions, the "maya" of pride and other passions that force us through the high drama of life and so on are made around the fulcrum of the redeeming power of *namasmarana*. In fact, even as we enter the computer age, the power of this exercise has to be tried and experienced to be believed.

Powers of Chant

There is also ample medical evidence to the tranquilizing powers of *Haripatha* the chant. The process can begin as mere *namoccharana* or utterance of the Lord's name, but as it is persisted with, one can feel the transition to the *namasmarana* or meditational stage even as one goes about with other activities. A sub-conscious level of parameditational relaxation can be obtained through *namasmarana*, which in no way needs to interfere

with or impair ongoing work. Indeed during this stage, work itself ceases to produce the anxiogenic overtones which it otherwise does. This in due course would lead to the *nishkama karma* stage of *karma yoga*. The *Haripatha* thus blends the tenets of *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga* in a very subtle and practical fashion. Whether or not one knows Marathi enough to understand all of *Haripatha*, it is its spirit one needs to imbibe, namely to learn to draw from the infinite source of the divine energy through the seemingly simple exercise of *namasmarana*. It is ultimately the power of mind that moves men and matter and this power cannot exist, let alone operate, without the nourishment of the divine energy.

(From excerpts of the note by Dr. S Srinivasan on Pancharatna Haripatha)

HARIPATHA

Standing at the doorsteps of God even for a while (by glimpse of Divine Realization), all four liberations are attained. {(1) Liberation from pain at physical level (2) Liberation from pain at mental level (3) Liberation of Karmic bondage at spiritual level (4) Liberation from the Divine Ego – I am That}

Utter the name of God, utter the name of God the value of Merits is infinite. (For this will lead the Path to Realization)

In spite of being involved in worldly activities let the tongue be busy in uttering the Divine Name. All the scriptures proclaim the same with upraised hands.

Jnanadeva says, as Vyasa has confirmed, The Lord of Dwaraka resides in Pandavas' home. {The Lord resides as True Self, as the king of city of doors, in the home of five principles. (i.e. Human body is temple of Lord)}. //1//

Please understand, all the four Vedas and Six Darshanas say, God alone is the Cause of all causes. All the eighteen Puranas sing the Glory of God.

Just as by churning (the Curd) for sweet butter (churn all the scriptures) for the Infinite God. (God alone is the essence) And throw all the unnecessary tales.

One and only one God is equally filled in microcosm and macrocosm; do not let your mind wander on the difficult (and strange) Path.

Jnanadeva says, chanting the Divine Name itself is God-experience (in itself) that God is densely filled everywhere. //2//

Trigunas (three attributes) (and the manifestations thereof) is not the Absolute or essence but (Nirguna) attribute-less (God) is the essence. Chanting of Divine Name is the contemplation of what essence is and what is not.

(Saguna and Nirguna are relative terms in respect of attributes, therefore,) Saguna (God with attributes) and Nirguna (God without attribute) are themselves the defects of attributes (in the context of God who is beyond these and is independent, or Absolute), so remember God, lest the mind wanders haywire (in discriminating whether He is Saguna or Nirguna).

Take refuge in Lord, who is un-manifested, without any form, unable to be grasped by senses, and the cause of both animate and inanimate.

For Jnaneshwara, Lord alone resides in his mind and is the subject of his contemplation so that he is reaping infinite blessings in this birth. //3//

Bhakti (God-surrender) is futile without the (Bhava) feelings (Lord's presence). There is no point of talking of Liberation without Bhakti. It is ridiculous to exert force without (possessing) the strength.

(Without Bhakti) How do you expect God be pleased instantaneously? Do not strain yourself unnecessarily and be in peace (with patience).

Day and night, you exert yourself so much in running after (ceaseless) worldly activities. Tell me, why do you not turn to God?

Jnanadeva says, "Sing the Divine Name, you will be free from (never-ending) worldly cravings"
//4//

(Without Bhakti) various sacrifices, rituals and Yoga will take you nowhere. These will cause only superfluous pride.

Without the feelings, God cannot be fully comprehended. Without grace of the Guru (Master), how can one experience Realization?

He (Guru) cannot be attained without (disciplined) sadhana (spiritual endeavor). Just as to achieve something you have to give something; he will teach you the highest good if you give your heart to him.

Jnanadeva gives the judgment from his experience that an association with a saint is the only recourse and resource.
//5//

When one receives Guru's grace his worldly consciousness dissolves and even his God - consciousness dissolves.

As the thread of camphor illumines a flame and eventually both camphor and flame disappear similarly God-consciousness eradicates body-ego-consciousness and thereafter the God-consciousness also disappears. (Supreme Consciousness, "I am that" also disappears).

The Devotee, who has surrendered himself to saints, attains the Glory of Fortune and arrives at the Gate of Liberation.

Jnanadeva takes delight in the company of saints and (by their grace) he sees God everywhere, in crowds, forests and even within "self"
//6//

One who has no love for God is Abhakta (disbeliever) depraved, fallen from God's grace, goes on accumulating mountains of sins which stick to him like rock-solid coating. He is indeed miserably unfortunate who does not adore God.

How can a chatterbox, who goes on and on raving nonsense, attain the ever-kind God?

Jnanadeva says, the one and only one (God) who is completely pervading every body and every “self” is his treasure whom alone he adores. //7//

In the company of saints mind is inclined to tread the path to God realization.
Let the tongue be busy chanting God’s name and mind full of feelings, for, Shiva, The Lord who is absorbed in his self too, loves to hear the Divine name.

Name, the indicator of one essence (God) helps attains realization and frees from the bondage of duality.

The devotee enjoys the same sweet ambrosia of the Divine Name as the yogi enjoys the sweet nectar of Life energy (Kundalini).

Realization came to Prahlada in whose mind Love for Divine name ignited quite soon and also to Uddhava who got Krishna himself as Guru through the love for the Divine Name.

Jnanadeva says, chanting of Divine Name is such an easy way, yet rare are the people on this path, very few understand and believe in its infinite powers. (Instead of easy path people like to take difficult path and that is why people on this path are rare.) //8//

His knowledge is in vain, who speaks of everything but Vishnu (All-Pervading, Omnipresent Lord) and whose mind does not dwell in Rama (who showers Bliss) and Krishna (who attracts everything).

He is unfortunate, who having born does not become aware of Advaita (one-ness,unity)
How can he be established and find rest in the Divine Name?

Unless the duality is swept away by the Guru’s grace how a person who has no knowledge can, sing the name of Divine? (Relish the sweetness of Divine name)

Jnanadeva says, chanting the Name of Lord is Saguna Dhyana (Meditation with attributes) on him. Chanting the “Name” is Mauna (seeking silence) in Prapancha (the World). (One may be busy with daily chores of making his living but if the mind is focused on the “Name” he attains the tranquility of mind). //9//

One may take a bath in the confluence of three holy rivers, or may visit several sacred places of pilgrimage but if the mind does not rest in the name of Lord, then all these are in vain.

One who turns away from the name of Lord is indeed unfortunate sinner and who else but Lord will rush to rescue him?

Sage Valmiki who is held in high esteem by Puranas, says by “Name” alone all the three worlds attain salvation.

Jnanadeva says, chant the “Name” and all the previous and future generations will be purified. //10//

On utterance of Lord’s Name, infinite heaps of sins will be destroyed in an instant. A straw of grass, when comes in contact with fire, itself becomes fire, similarly the person, who chants the Name, himself becomes God (Divine).

The power of chanting the Name is beyond comprehension. It is a great mantra (incantation) and all the afflictions caused by ghosts (or the actions and events of the past) flee with fear.

Jnanadeva says, my Lord is all-powerful and even the scriptures (upanishadas) have failed to fathom his greatness. //11//

Taking bath in holy waters, observance of vows and practice of strict rituals are all futile and do not grant fulfillment if the heart is not full with feelings of Love and Faith. People are needlessly engaged in such unfruitful activities.

It is only by the feeling of Love of His Divine Existence; God Realization can come, as tangible as a fruit in the palm of hand, and not otherwise. (Without Love) all other efforts of attaining God are cumbersome, like collecting droplets of liquid mercury that has been spilled out on ground.

Jnanadeva says, the formless and attribute-less God has been completely given to me in my hands by (my guru) Nivritti. //12//

When the mind dwells in Duality (that God is separated from me) how can one attain the samadhi (One-ness with God), without the same Joy and Bliss of God experienced as in the Unity.

There is no supreme attainment of mind and intellect other than achieving the state of one-ness (Samadhi) which can be fructified only by One God (and one-ness with God).

On the path of attaining the state of Samadhi, miraculous powers and worldly achievements come but if the mind is not established in the Divine Bliss, these remain only as unnecessary obstacles and burden.

Jnanadeva says, I contemplate on God all the time and the ‘satisfaction of my mind’ rests happily in Joy and Bliss. //13//

Dark forces of Nature and Time will not even glance at the person, who devotes proper time (Mita) for regular (Nitya) and sincere practice of chanting the Divine Name with true feelings of Lord’s existence (Satya).

The chanting of Divine Name equals infinite austere penances; flocks of sins will run away by its power.

Even Lord is engaged in chanting Divine Name, whoever chants it will attain salvation.

Jnanadeva says, chanting of Divine Name is the only practice by which he attained the Supreme State of Realization. //14//

The Name of God alone can remove duality but there are very few adepts and very few realize the Unity.

Chant the Name of Lord who equally exists everywhere, with the feeling of equality (in all beings, states and times) and the Lord will bring about the self-control and self-restraint (and all such requisites in devotee).

Then he will realize that “One” solitary Self (Atma) shines like the Sun with thousand rays in each and every being.

Jnanadeva says, the mind is fixed on the Name with unfailing practice by which I am free from future births. (All manifestations are results of “cause and effect”, like seed and tree. Having burnt all the seeds there is no manifestation and the individual existence merges in Divine existence, the state of Unity). //15//

In spite of the fact that chanting of the Name is such an easy thing, rare are the people who chant the Name with their mind and intellect established in it.

The state of “Unmani” (the supreme state of consciousness i.e. the state beyond the four states of consciousness) is achieved by chanting of Lord’s Name. (Four states are (1) wakefulness (2) Dreaming (3) Deep Sleep (4) Pure Divine Ego-I am That). By achieving such supreme state, the miraculous powers are endowed upon.

After attaining the Lord, miraculous powers (Siddhi), brilliance of intellect (Buddhi) and righteousness (Dharma) will all follow and all the people will find solace from worldly troubles in the company of saint who has achieved this state.

Jnanadeva says, Lord’s Name has made deep impression on his heart so that he sees his “Self”, the Lord everywhere in all ten directions. //16//

One who sings the glory of Lord, even his body becomes holy.

By the power of austere practice (of chanting the Holy Name) the devotee makes an eternal home for himself in the Heaven.

His mother, father, siblings, ancestors, progeny and all the loved ones attain Unity with Lord.

Jnanadeva says, the secret knowledge which can be understood, is entrusted to me by Nivritti. //17//

One, who reads the scriptures, sings the glory of Lord and who does not find anything worthwhile other than Lord attains Heaven and earns all the merits of taking a bath in holy rivers and other pilgrimages.

One, who follows his mind which wanders here and there is deprived of all this. Blessed is he, whose mind is fixed on Lord.

Jnanadeva says, he loves the sweetness of nectar which comes from the reservoir of Lord's name, therefore he cherishes Lord's name and rests in bliss all the time. //18//

Vedas and Upanishads (Sacred scriptures) proclaim with authority that Lord and his Name is the sole purport.

Without the remembrance of Lord all the chanting, austerities, deeds and religious practices are unnecessary exertions and are not fruitful.

One who follows the path of remembrance of Lord rests in peace and contentment like a bee in search of honey is enwrapped in closed petals of a flower.

Jnanadeva says, "Name of Lord is my weapon, fearing which the deity of death (Yama) has abandoned our family". //19//

Chanting of Lord's Name is a treasure of a devotee which he goes on accumulating whereby his sins, which are in infinitely large number are destroyed.

The chanting of Lord's Name is equivalent to performing austerities over infinite lifetimes. It is the easiest of all paths to Liberation.

Yoga, (Yaga) sacrifices, (Dharma-adharma) religious rituals and (Maya) illusions ultimately merge to disappear in the Name of Lord.

Jnanadeva says, Lord alone is his Yoga, Yaga, deeds and Dharma and without the Name of Lord there is no other practice worthwhile. //20//

There is no restriction of Time and duration for chanting Lord's Name, the savior of both time and space; in fact the Name transcends the devotee beyond these.

Lord's Name will drive away all the defects, flaws or blemishes; the Lord alone is the savior of ignorant beings.

How can one praise good fortune of those for whom the tongue is only to chant the Name which is the essence or purport of Life.

Jnanadeva says; I have chanted the Lord's Name with all its aspects in entirety and thereby the Path to attain Liberation became easy for my ancestors. //21//

It is rare to find a person who has made the practice of chanting Name a regular religious observance; such a person enjoys the association with Lord- the consort of Laxmi-the Goddess of richly abundance.

He also enjoys the companionship of all the material abundance as well as four Liberations in his house.

Hell is the Life without Lord! Such an individual is the guest of Deity of Death. (He goes through the endless cycles of life and death).

Jnanadeva expressed his fervent desire to know about 'Name' and Nivritti replied, 'Name' is infinitely greater than the sky above. //22//

Seven (planes or stages of consciousness), Five (Elements), Three (attributes) and Ten (Five Senses and their respective Five Subjects of perception) and their infinite combinations or manifestations have all emerged from "One" Lord. "One" Lord has the skill of expressing himself into many.

It is not so with the "Name" of Lord. "Name" establishes One-ness or Unity and that is why, it is the superior path to liberation. It requires no strenuous efforts.

In the Ajapa-Japa (Chanting but no chanting, focusing the mind on breath which is nothing but consisting of So-Hum Japa), one has to reverse the Prana (Cosmic Energy) flow (Raise the Kundalini- i.e. going deeper and deeper to subtler and subtler objects of meditation) and this requires a great strength as well as strong will power. (But Chanting or remembrance of Lord does not require painful efforts).

Jnanadeva says, "Life without 'Name' is futile so I move forward on the path of "Name" to Lord". //23//

The practice of Japa (recitation), Tapa ,(austerity), karma kriya (rituals), Nema (spiritual discipline) and Dharma (religious deeds) all have the sole purpose of attaining pure feeling of existence of Lord in every being.

Do not give up the pure feeling of love and drop all your doubts (hold the conviction in your heart) and chant fervently the "Name", earnestly calling upon Lord to appear before.

Without becoming conscious of family reputation, creed, financial and social status, virtuous character and deeds take refuge in Lord with great feelings of love.

Jnanadeva says, "Lord alone is the subject of my mind and meditation and I experience living in liberation with Lord every moment". //24//

Lord makes no differentiation between Jnani (wise, learned) and Ajnani (ignorant, unlearned), for Lord both are same and on chanting the Name he blesses both equally with same liberation.

Dark evil forces of death and destruction cannot even enter the place where Lord's Name is being chanted.

When the Vedas (Holy Scriptures) themselves cannot comprehend Lord completely, how can we ignorant, know his greatness?

Jnanadeva says, "I see the heaven everywhere in the whole Universe and this is what I got as a reward of chanting Lord's Name".

//25//

Lord is the sole Principle, the Absolute, so also his Name. There is non-duality between Lord and his Name. Lord and his Name are "One". Hold this conviction in your mind firmly and cherish the "Name" in your heart. Lord will shower his mercy upon you.

The Name is very easy to chant therefore chant the Name. Before the "Name" is uttered let the heart be drenched with love for the "Name".

"Name" is the Absolute Principle and nothing is greater than that. Know this fact. You will otherwise go on wandering on other difficult paths in eagerness forsaking the path of "Name".

Jnanadeva says, "I hold Lord firmly in my mind and have attained unity with Him. It is the Lord himself chanting continuously the "Name" in my heart and I have become silent within and without"

//26//

The "Name" is sweetest of all pleasures; this is the verdict of all the scriptures therefore do not remain idle even for a fraction of moment without the "Name".

The Lord is eternal, constant, and never-changing while the perceived world is not. Lord pervades the whole Universe. Until you realize this, there will be futile cycle of births and deaths.

Chanting of "Name" is mantra which will drive away infinity of sins. Therefore, cling on to the Name of Lord with committed mind.

This will bring out True Self which will break the spell of illusion. Do not allow senses to blind your vision.

Have an attitude of compassion, serenity and kindness in your mind towards all; this is the austerity that will make Lord to be willing guest.

Jnanadeva declares, "The truth is, Chanting Lord's Name is a Sanjeevan Samadhi (Life-restoring Union with Absolute); this wisdom is bestowed upon me by Nivrittideva".

(Translated by Hemantpm and offered at the lotus feet of Jnaneshwara)